

Tiger bowlers grab 8 medals at regional tournament

Two Special Olympics athletes from Fort Lewis win gold, advance to state tournament

By Joe Barrentine
Northwest Guardian

Bowlers from the post's Special Olympics team came back from Silverdale, Wash., with a little more swagger in their steps after picking up several medals at Sunday's regional tournament.

All eight members of the Fort Lewis Tigers bowling team placed in their respective divisions and the doubles team of Christopher Dean, 17, and Alex Eason, 15, took home first place medals, qualifying them for the state tournament in Seattle, Nov. 8 and 9.

"I knew they would do well, and they did," said bowling coach Lana Muzzy.

Two Tigers won second place medals: Kyle Davis, 9, in the assisted ramp division and Justin Dixon, 17, in the individual competition.

Third place medals went to Joshua, 14, and Alex Vollmer, 13, in the unified doubles division and Phillip Kellas, 9, Drew Peltier, 18, in singles competition.

"It turned out so good," said Angela McNeil, Kellas' mother. "I think everyone on the team placed and got a medal. They all did well and everything worked out great."

Even if they didn't all qualify, McNeil said they are all probably state tournament bound anyway.

"We might as well all go and support each other," she said.

Supporting each other is just another part of being on the team McNeil said.

"They are kind of like an extended family," she added. "These are the events that get us through these times."

With many family members deployed or off training, the bowlers and their families draw together.

"(Drew) likes the friendships with the other kids and he loves the coaches," said Francie Peltier, Drew's mother. "He's a very social being, so (sports) are his existence. The bowling is something he looks forward to."

Drew's brother, Pfc. Geoff Peltier, 173rd Airborne Brigade and former swimming coach for the Fort Lewis Special Olympics team, was home on leave and went to the tournament. He said the tournament brought back good memories.

"Anytime I can come home and get to something like this it's a good time,"



Photos by Joe Barrentine

Above: Drew Peltier hugs his uncle Tony Loughran at All-Star Lanes in Silverdale, Wash., Sunday morning. Loughran was one of many family members to who turned out to root on the Tigers in the regional qualifying tournament of the Special Olympics of Washington bowling tournament.

Right: Kyle Davis fires a ball down the ramp towards the pins in the first game of tournament play Sunday.

Geoff said.

While only two of the Tigers will represent Fort Lewis at the state tournament, the rest of the team will continue league play. Muzzy said the bowlers would all be rooting for their teammates.

"We've got big hopes for them at state," Muzzy said. "I know they will do well, a medal at minimum."

The more than 300 bowlers who bowled in the tournament exemplified the Special Olympics athlete's creed states it well: Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.

In addition to bowling, Fort Lewis has a full schedule of athletics for special needs children. In the winter there

Tournament results

● Gold medal winners:
Christopher Dean
Alex Eason

● Silver medal winners:
Kyle Davis
Justin Dixon

● Bronze medal winners:
Joshua Vollmer
Alex Vollmer
Phillip Kellas
Drew Peltier

is basketball, in the summer there are both swimming and track and field. And in the summer there is softball.



Gymnastics class teaches young people skills, fun

By Steven Field
Northwest Guardian

At the request of Coach Denise Ruffner, four 7-year-old girls lined up to the balance beam.

"Now we are going to do cartwheels on the beam," Ruffner said.

"Easy," one girl whispered to another.

These girls are a small segment of the Fort Lewis Youth Services gymnastics class that includes children as old as 17 and young as 5, covering a wide spectrum of experience and ability.

"I did gymnastics as a child," said Laurie Dillon, head coach and director of the post class. She has been teaching children how to tumble, vault and stunt for 30 years, 15 of which she has spent with the Fort Lewis community.

Dillon teaches the class with Ruffner, who has been coaching for 13 years, and Grace McCullough, who has been coaching for 4 years.

The program is recreational in nature, Dillon said, with classes meeting twice a week for 55 minutes each time.

While Dillon has experience coaching and participating in competitive gymnastics, she enjoys teaching on a recreational level as well.

"It's an excellent foundation for any physical activity because we are working physical and mental discipline, strength,

flexibility," she said. "The skills that they learn here they can take to anything else they do."

Despite its recreational emphasis, Dillon has infused her students with a passion for the sport.

"I would like to make a (competitive) college team," said Krystal Andrews, 17.

A high school senior, she aspires to be a gymnast at the University of Washington next year.

"The (University of Washington gymnastics) team is really good," she said. "I know they placed in the top three the past couple years."

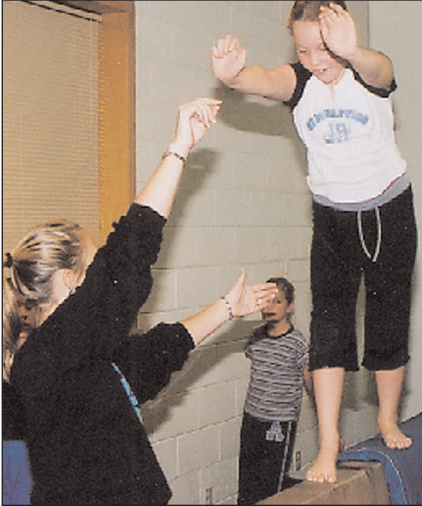
The love of gymnastics is evident in the entire class.

"I wanna be a gymnast when I grow up," said Tawny Phelps, 7.

One of the youngest in the intermediate/advanced class, Phelps has only been with the program for a few months. She said that she started doing gymnastics because her friends were and then fell in love with it.

Her favorite part of gymnastics is swinging on the bars. As for her favorite stunt on the bars, she "forget(s) what it is called. But it is cool."

Parents are free to watch from the "Replay Room," said Dillon. The children also do a number of shows for parents and the community, including an annual show at the Puyallup Fair.



Steven Field

Coach Denise Ruffner spots Amberlyn Segreist, who tries a cartwheel on beam.

"This is something we offer year round. This gives them something to do besides other sports, which are more seasonal," said Dillon.

"It's just a lot of fun," said Andrews.

The class is sponsored by Fort Lewis Youth Services and are held Tuesdays and Thursdays in Building 2295, located on South 12th Street and Bitar Avenue.

For more information, call Dillon at 535-2902.

Christmas play auditions begin Sunday, open to all

'Best Christmas Pageant Ever' production seeks performers

Steven J. Schneider
Northwest Guardian

Auditions for the 2003 Fort Lewis Youth Theater production of "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" will be held Sunday and Monday, 4:30 p.m., at the Nelson Recreation Center.

The annual play is free and will be Dec. 11 and 12, 7 p.m. Last year's show drew a crowd of about 250 people a night.

The auditions are open to males and females of all ages.

"We do this play every holiday season," said Kate Laverents, Directorate of Community Activities. "There are always good roles for children."

Laverents said in past years, there have been children as young as 2 years old in the play.

"Everybody who auditions is in the show," Laverents said.

Younger children who can't read are typically given singing roles, but in the past, children who can't read have held speaking parts through practicing

with a parent, Laverents said.

"It's a real confidence booster for the kids," Laverents said about the play.

Volunteers are also needed to help with the children, to set changes and make costumes, Laverents said.

"Anybody who comes to help, we'll gladly put them to work," she said.

The Fort Lewis Youth Theater group is well worth watching, Laverents said.

They have taken first place two years in a row for Directorate of the Army Entertainment.

This year's play has a positive message and helps set the mode for season, Laverents said.

"It's a good way to get into the holiday spirit," Laverents said.

"It's a good way to get into the holiday spirit."

Kate Laverents

Haunted house

Continued from Page B1

The characters appear unreal and ease patrons into a false sense of security. The monsters wink, sneeze or start following people as they traverse through the "room of heads," the vampire room, the mummy room and the werewolf room.

"I liked how everybody (the monsters) jumped out at you. I thought they were fake," said Collier, who thought this year's haunted house was better than last year's.

"I liked the way (the monsters) stood still and looked fake, and what made it worse ... they followed you," said Nicole Rodriguez, 14.

The performances tend to be a lot

more frightening when they're unpredictable, said Strock.

This might be one reason the Fort Lewis Haunted House is such a success every year, said Paul Parrish, head of recreation delivery services.

Some challenges can't be avoided, however.

"The hardest part in doing haunted houses is kids nowadays aren't as familiar with the characters as they used to be," said Strock, while a group of young people outside discussed what movie "Jason" came from.

The haunted house will open today, Saturday and Oct. 31 at Summit Skate Arena, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. The cost is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children under 12.

The first two days are geared more toward adult horror. It will be toned

down on its last day for children, said Carmen Torres, a representative of the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program. MWR also funds Fort Lewis' annual Halloween Carnival/Harvest Fest to provide non-scary Halloween fun and entertainment for children ages 2 to 6 years old.

The MWR staff encourages children to dress in Halloween costumes for the event and enjoy candy, games and prizes at the various booths.

The carnival encompasses both the Summit Skate Arena parking lot, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., and the Youth Fitness Zone, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., Oct. 31. Hayrides will be provided between the two locations.

Admission is \$1 and a canned food item for the post food bank.

For more information call 967-5776.

Pumpkin farm

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The farm covers 170 acres of land. Crops are grown on about 30 acres. The pumpkin patches take up about 10 acres and the corn maze is approximately eight acres, said Jeff.

The Schilters pride themselves on their family-oriented operation. They both note that it is a great value — quality time with the family at little cost.

"It's an inexpensive way to spend some quality time with your family," said Jeff.

Stephanie pointed out that their petting farm is free and is a highlight for many of the farm's younger visitors. To cater to the interests of children, the barn is filled with goats, pigs and horses.

"My favorite part is working with the little kids," said Stephanie. "They are fun and cute to watch enjoying the animals and picking the pumpkins. Especially the kids from up in Tacoma and Seattle who come down who are never around farm animals. They really get excited when they get to pet a calf or pig."

"It's enjoyable, it's rewarding to see the kids having a good time," Jeff said.

Although they can be considered pumpkin experts, their favorite pumpkin dishes are classics — pumpkin pie for Jeff and pumpkin soup for Stephanie.

Jeff put it simply: "Pumpkins are fun."

The farm is located at 141 Nisqually Cut-off Road, off of Exit 114 from I-5. For more information, call (360) 459-4023.

Pumpkin patches and family fun

- Hunter's Pumpkin Patch
7401 Yelm Highway Southeast
Olympia, Wash.
(360) 456-0466
- Maris Farms
24713 Sumner-Buckley Highway
Buckley, Wash.
888-235-5439
- Rutledge Farm's Corn Maze
302 93rd Avenue Southeast
Olympia, Wash.
(360) 280-8179
- Schiller Family Farm
141 Nisqually Cut-off Road
Nisqually, Wash.
(360) 459-4023

Overseas holiday mail dates

Destination	First class	Priority mail	Parcel airlift	Space available	Parcel post
APO/FPO AE zips 090-099	Dec. 11	Dec. 11	Dec. 4	Nov. 28	Nov. 13
APO/FPO AA zips 340	Dec. 11	Dec. 11	Dec. 4	Nov. 28	Nov. 13
APO/FPO AP zips 962-966	Dec. 11	Dec. 11	Dec. 4	Nov. 28	Nov. 13